them. Moreover, it fitted in with Chinese ancestral rites and concern for the welfare of the dead, for it held that by funeral and post-funeral services performed by experts the soul of the departed could be rescued from the pool of blood and other unhappy states.

Thus Buddhism had become naturalized in China, its major sects, especially Ch'an, Ch'ing T[J]u, and Chen-yen being adaptations to the Chinese environment and Chinese needs. This, it must be remarked, was a notable intellectual and religious achievement. It is interesting to find, moreover, a Buddhist monk of the eighth and ninth centuries attempting to prove the accord of Buddhist and Confucian morality and of Taoist and Buddhist metaphysics.

In no dynasty after the T'ang did Buddhism develop a new sect. As we shall see in another chapter, down to our day it has contributed to the formation of numerous popular, lay cults. While these are additional evidence that Buddhism has become and is an integral part of Chinese life, so far as we know none of them has displayed any very original religious insight or has possessed high intellectual content. While Buddhism was to go on as an outstanding feature of Chinese culture, by the end of the T'ang its vitality had begun to ebb.

The cause of this decline must be a matter of conjecture. It may have been the decay of Buddhism in India and the consequent paucity of fresh currents flowing from there to China, It must probably also in part be assigned to the recruiting of so

many members of the bureaucracy from those trained in the Confucian texts. With short interruptions, state examinations based upon non-Buddhist literature were to continue to our own day. Since through them lay the chief road to social and political distinction, they tended to absorb the best brains of the country. Buddhism was weak in that it was other-worldly and had no political program. Chinese rulers, seeking a system which would help them govern the Empire, found in Confucianism what Buddhism lacked. Whatever the cause, with the later years of the T'ang Buddhism began slowly to decay.